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Gentle Joseki, part VI by Pieter Mioch

The Patterns

Hoshi (4-4 point)

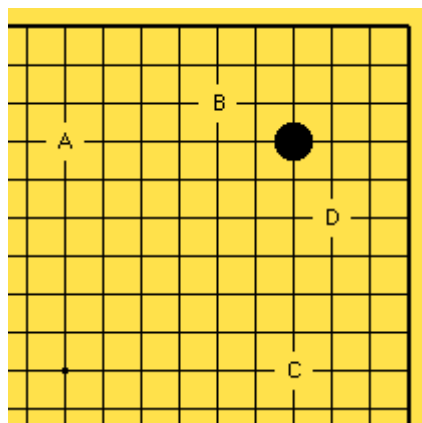


Diagram 1

The stone at Hoshi is not directly concerned with territory, building frameworks is what Hoshi is supposed to be all about. For example an additional play at either A or C will not increase the actual amount of points made by one iota. The amount of *potential* points, however is easily doubled as is the fighting strength potential (were white to play between the black stones). Developing towards A or C comes as a first priority, if you don't feel like making a framework the way of developing the Hoshi stone would be to play at B or D. If you feel you are in the position of freely playing any of the moves A-D it is often a good idea to go for the move which has the most/ nicest follow-up moves.

A Nice Flow

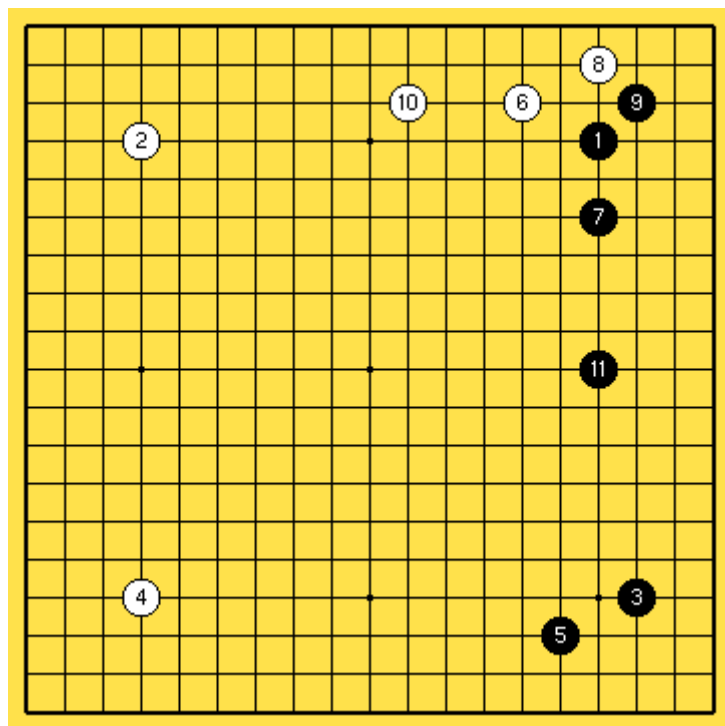
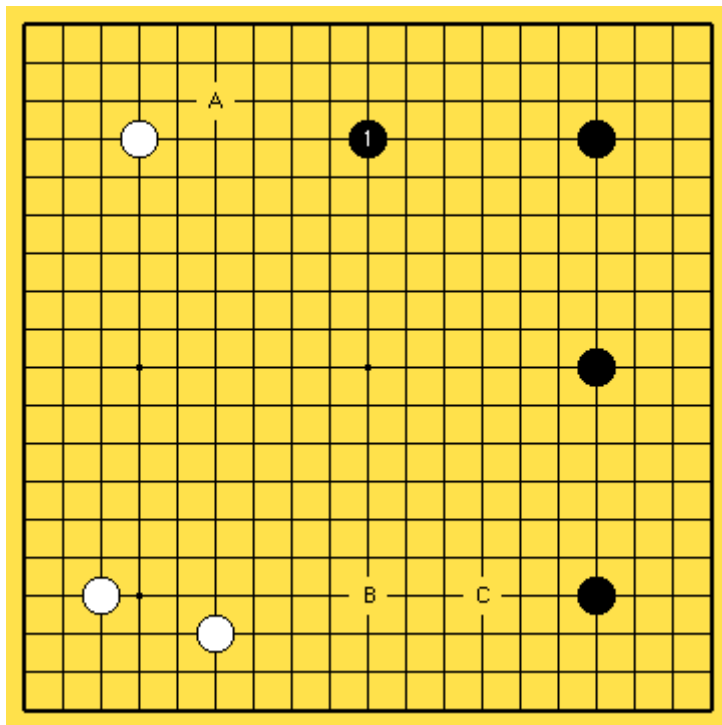


Diagram 2

After white 6 not a few players playing black might torture themselves while figuring out which of the tens of josekies mastered they should apply here. Well, I'm over simplifying things on purpose now but to put it bluntly: It doesn't matter what joseki you pick, as long as it does do "something" for the right side black will not do bad. Black 11 might be a little "of joseki" (books give this move one space to the right). But it is undoubtedly an excellent point. It sets up a huge potential territory and is a very nice extension with regard to the bottom right corner as well.

In the above game example black is Yamashiro "Golden Child" Hiroshi who beat Qian Yuping from china for the 3rd China-Japan match, 1987.

Framework-Style

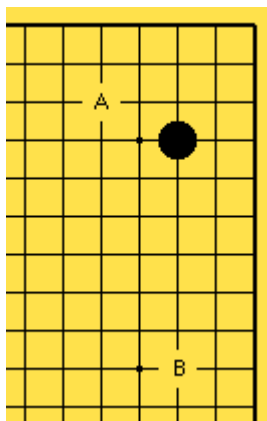


In dia 3 there might be alternative moves possible instead of black 1. If this were my own game, however, I wouldn't bother checking those and would play at 1 in no time. Next black has the nice aim of a move at A. Instead of black 1 I think that playing at the bottom is not so interesting. White's shimari in the bottom left corner should be regarded as a strong position (shimaries are those things you do not play in the direct vicinity of soon because of low-gain probability). And a black play at B has not much territory making or fighting to look forward to. If black has the chance of playing at the bottom in the future (for example after black 1, white A) I would extend no farther than C.

Diagram 3

For more detailed explanation of Hoshi openings and joseki please (re) read Gentle Joseki I-V.

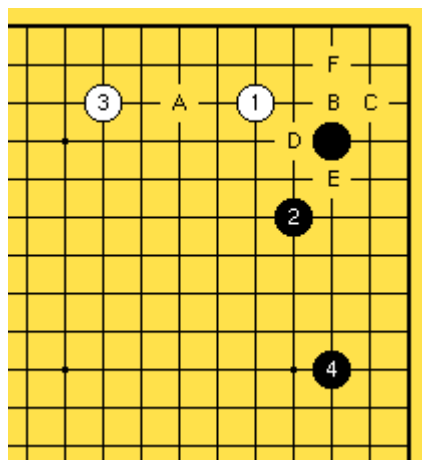
Ko-Moku (4-3 point)



The primary direction of development of a ko-moku stone is towards the left, for example A. It is intriguing that in both situations, either black plays himself at A first or his opponent plays an approach move at A, this focus shifts. The secondary direction of development is towards point B.

Diagram 4

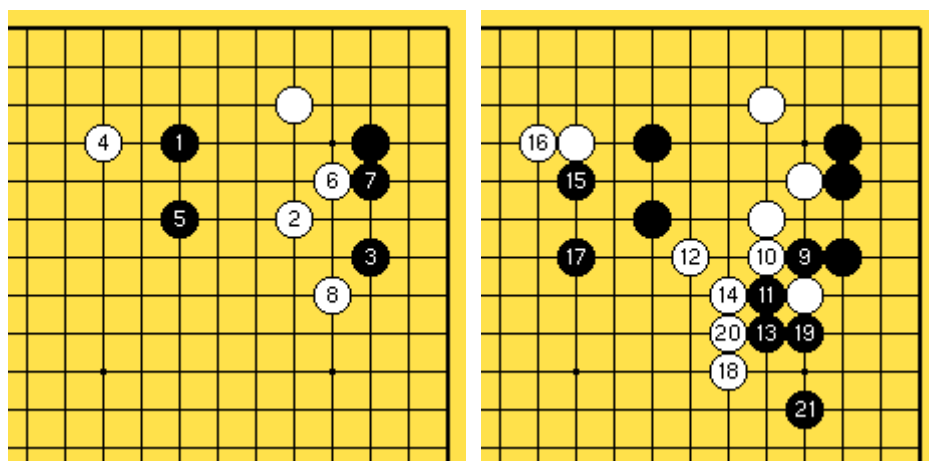
Peaceful possibility



In dia 5 a very peaceful possibility is shown. Both players are a kind of minding their own business and are as yet not thinking about bashing each other's heads in. Black comes to play at 4 in a very natural-flow kind of way. White played 3 which is just a little thin. Black can aim at playing at A but white has a handy self-settling maneuver if he plays at B (black C, white D, black E, and white F) after which white has become strong enough to deal with the black invasion, he hopes...

Diagram 5

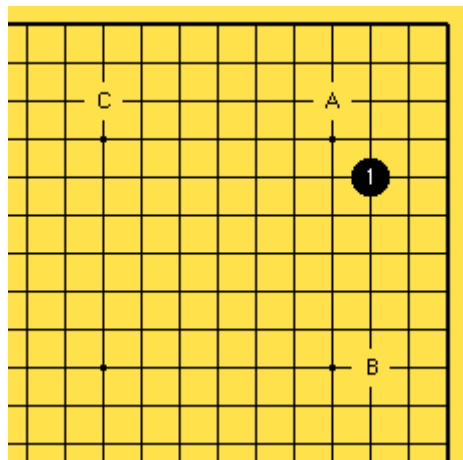
A Little More Complicated



For those among you who have a taste for longer and more complicated josekies here are dias 6 and 6a. There is no telling what will happen after the black pincer 1, there are literally zillions of ways to get of the main track and the end result does almost entirely depend on how good you can handle yourself when in battle and has not much to do with joseki (book) knowledge. One last word about dia 6a, black 9 is not the only possible move but it often shows a positive attitude to push through and cut in a case like this when your opponent tries to push you along the 3rd line.

Diagram 6 & 6a

Moku-hazushi (5-3 point)

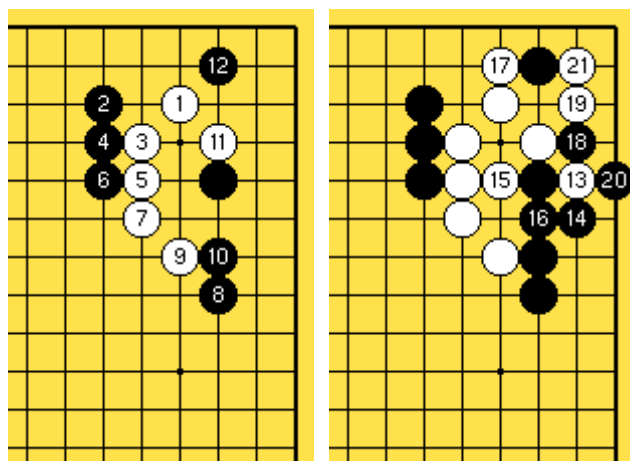


Moku hazushi is an old move with a modern touch; like the Hoshi play on its own it does not make territory. An additional play at A, the primary line of developing makes a nice shimari, the ideal shape to make solid points. Black's opponent, however, usually will hurry to keep black from playing at A in an extremely affective manner, white will play at A himself. Once white has entered the corner the focus again shifts to point B, the second line of developing. If white does not prevent black from making a shimari and black gets the chance of playing at A himself the focus shifts to developing towards the left side, for example point C.

Diagram 7

By the way, please keep in mind that when I'm talking about primary, secondary etcetera lines of development I do not mean to tell you that these lines of playing are a must or that you're doing something wrong when your stones end up facing the opposite side.. I'm only showing you what is considered a natural way of playing. This is often at the same time a rather peace full way of playing, too. Once a fighting variation of a joseki is initiated, however, you can conveniently forget about those "lines of development" (you are not developing anything, you're supposedly much to busy getting your opponent of your back).

Black's One-Space Pincer



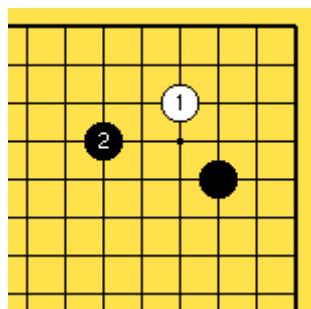
This is a not so peaceful joseki, but it's not all out rough-and-tumble either. After white entered the corner at 1 the easiest thing to do for black would be the extend to the lower right, using a 3 or four point jump. This approach can be extremely feasible when there's a black formation in the lower right corner already.

In dia 8, however, black chose to pincer at 2, not such an easy move. White has a couple of ways of moving out, the diagonal move (kosumi) is probably the simplest. Black 12 is the vital point and an interesting move. Black does not need to sacrifice his stone 12 if he doesn't want to.

Instead of 14 he can play at 17. After this exchange, however white is not complaining and eats a black stone by playing at 16. Black 12 is usually played with the idea of inducing white to strengthen black's stones and to make sure white is the one who has to play the last move in the corner, enabling black to play elsewhere first.

Diagram 8 & 8a

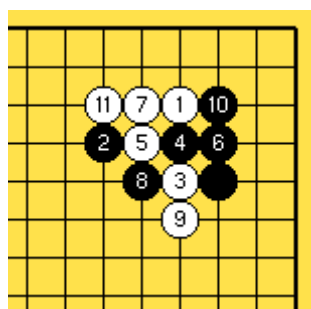
Are You Under 18?



The main feature of the moku-hazushi move is black 2. This innocent looking move in dia 9 can initiate the terrifying Taisha joseki (if you're under 18 please hit the back button of your browser, now)

Diagram 9

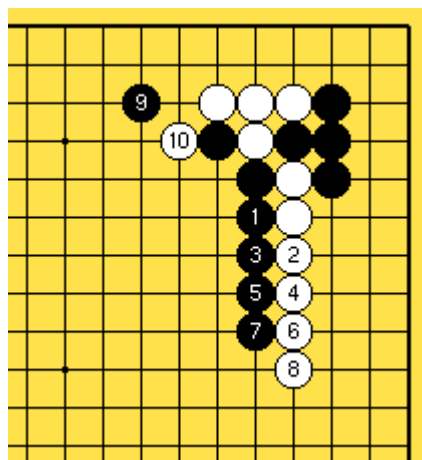
Basic Taisha



The reason why most people stay away of the Taisha joseki is because it's really long and difficult and there are plenty of trick moves involved. The sequence up to 11 in dia 10 is the basic Taisha pattern. Already both players have had to skip a bunch of sidetrack variations to get here. Those, however, are regarded as the easier variations, the real hard part comes after white 11 where black can choose amongst at least 5 possible moves. At the Leiden Go-club these were known as the "Tombstone" variations, probably because one of the players is supposed to meet his maker.

Diagram 10

Extreme Taisha

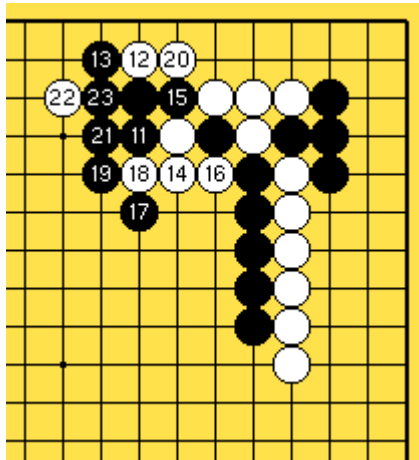


In other words, the reason why some people have a liking for the Taisha joseki is because they have studied and memorized one or two particular tricky variations, which they are eager to use as a means to flabbergast their opponent.

Diagram 11 (1-10)

The variation shown in dia 11 was popular among a couple of us when I was still playing tournaments. After black 9 white has to be very careful.

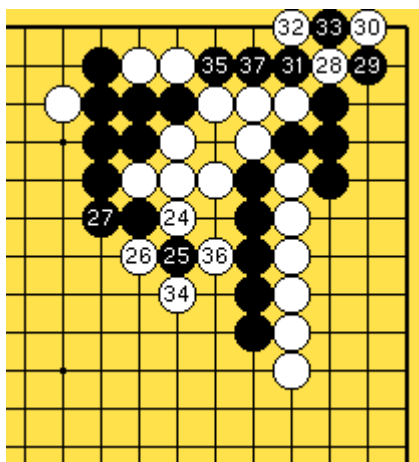
Continuation



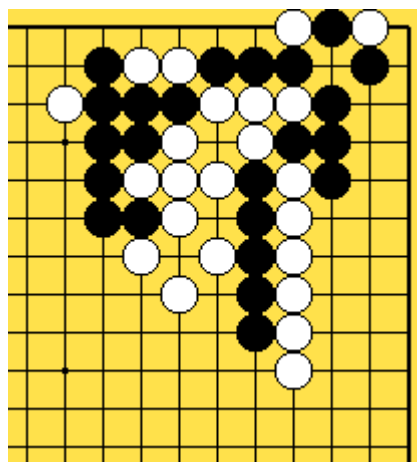
The funny thing with people who study joseki for the sole purpose of trying to trick the opponent in order to get an easy / early lead is that they are quite often not very knowledgeable. And (I'm talking about myself of 15 years back now) it is not at all rare that the trickster gets tangled in his own devious web of "Hamete" (trick moves). White 12 is excellent timing, in order to hold white inside black can only play at 13.

Diagram 11a (11-23)

Foiling The Trick Taisha, End



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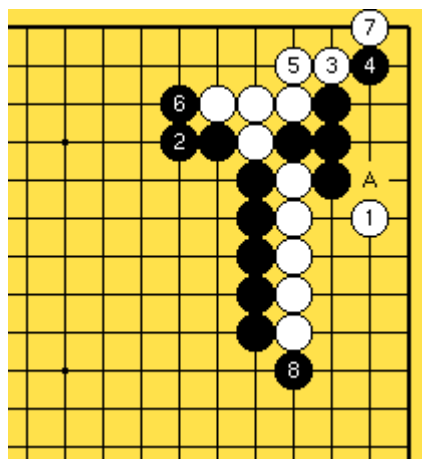


(final position)

After black 35 white plays the very calm move at 36. This is the key to getting a good result. In variation 11-11b white gets a better result, neatly avoiding all of black's nasty traps. By the way, the ko which white can set up in the corner (28-30 in dia 11b) can often be used as a way to safe himself in the more difficult patterns.

Diagram 11b (24-37)

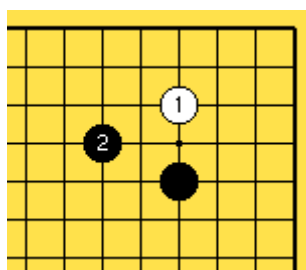
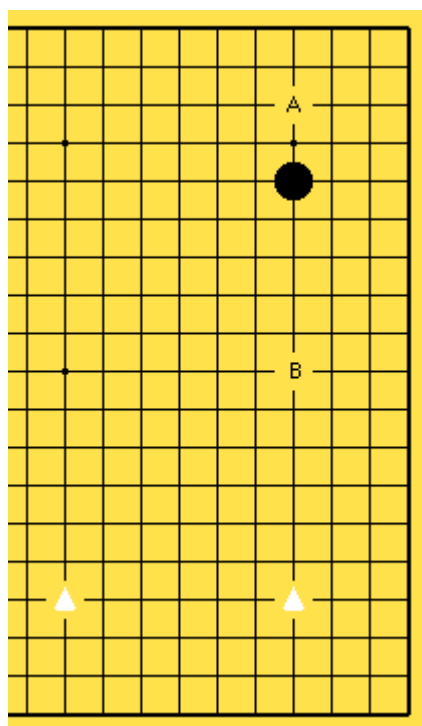
Not A Good Forcing Move



When people showed me this Joseki for the first time I was told that White 1 in dia 11x was a skillful move. As it turns out, however, white 1 is questionable. White's intention is to make black answer submissively at A before playing at the place of black 8. Black, however, does not answer the white forcing move but instead lets go of the complete corner! This result is regarded as better for black.

Diagram 11x

Taka-Moku (the 5-4 point)



Taka-moku, similar to the 5-3 point, has a modern feeling. It does not make any points on its own, and especially since the nineties it is often used in a moyo-making, fighting kind of game. The next move, if black's going to play one, is of course at A.

Diagram 12 & 12a

Nowadays, however, often people do purposefully not play at A, even if they have the time for it. The idea is, especially when black has stones in the neighborhood of the triangle marked spots, to go for influence with black 2 in dia 12a. Playing like this obviously shifts the focus to point B, big time.

Earning Respect

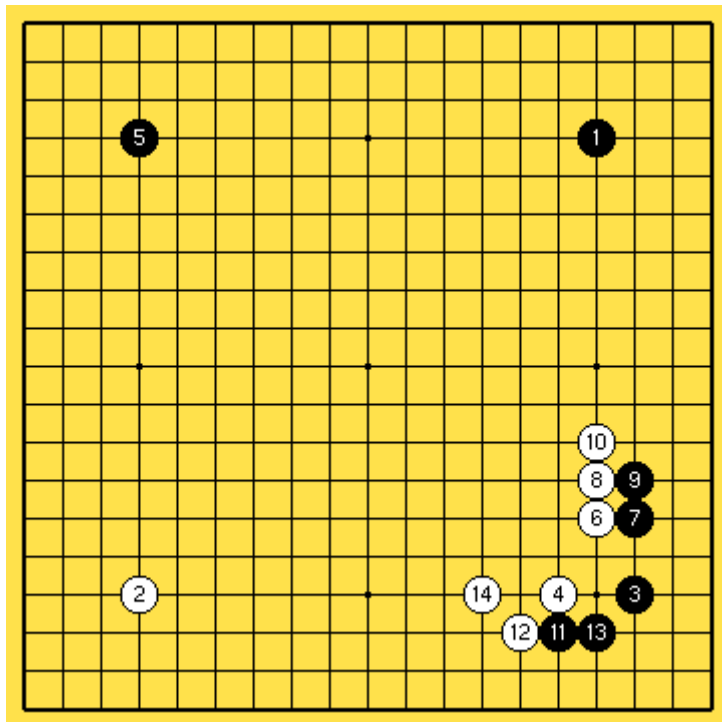


Diagram 13

White 6 is a very nice move and one of the main attractions of the 5-4 point. White wins this game eventually by half a point. I think that white's way of playing only recently has become popular. Playing like this white must have steady confidence in his / her abilities in order to neglect making territory in spite of the disadvantage of not having the first move. You can not help but feel respect for white, playing like this, and winning.

Not Such A Modern Move After All

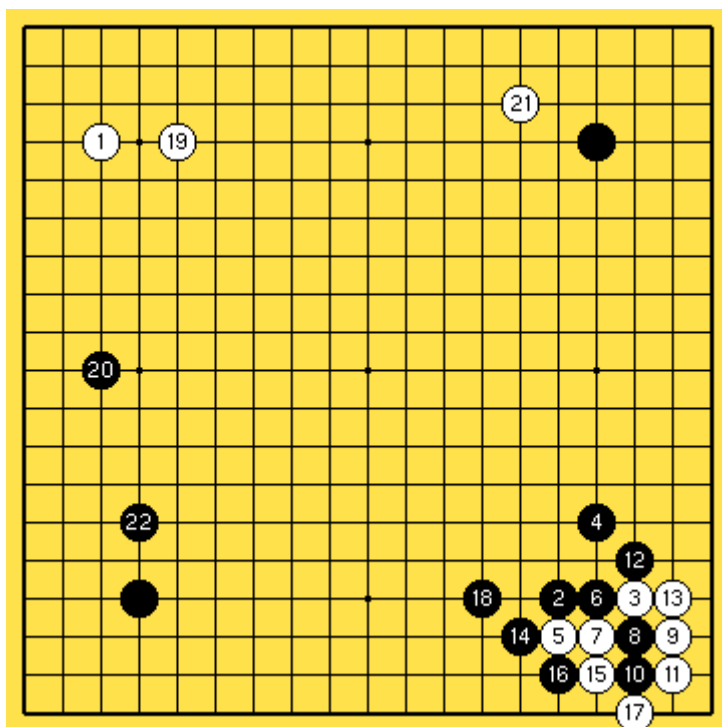
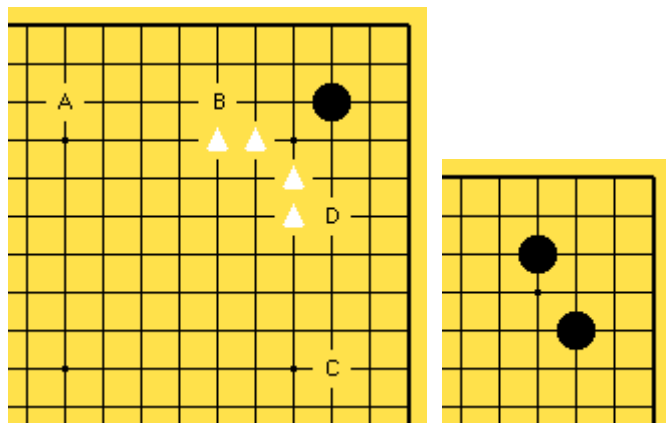


Diagram 14

I only show you this game to prove that you cannot trust me as far as you can throw me. Although this game was played in 1881, even before anybody had heard of "Shinfuseki" (= new, center oriented opening) black 4 was played as a standard move already. It was a 2 stone handicap game so that does explain it in a way. Black 4 was not so popular but all the same, just because black 4 wasn't played so much a long time ago does not mean that it's a typical "new" or modern move. In this case it only means that for centuries black 4 was thought of as a splendid move, backed up by (some) Hoshi stones. Of course, the only problem, except for handicap games, nobody played on Hoshi very much.

Hayashi, who plays the black stones uses his Hoshi stones in the powerful framework strategy. He forces his opponent Nakagawa to resign this game in 155 moves. Note that black's lower left corner still is more or less open, in spite of two additional moves 20 and 22.

San San (the 3-3 point)

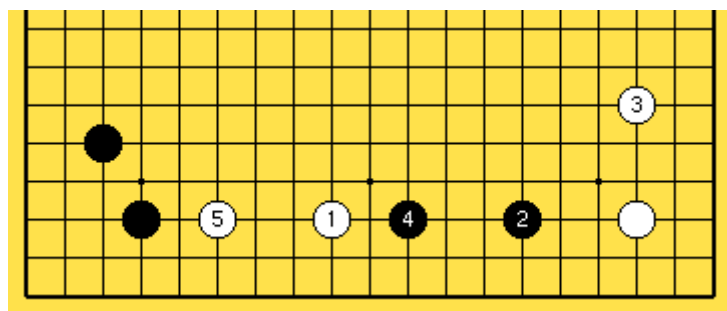


Well, there is not much of direction to the 3-3 point. What I mean is that as with a stone on Hoshi it is self-sufficient, you do not need to hurry and play an extra move. (In contrast, all the asymmetrical moves 3-4; 3-5; and 4-5 are best completed with a second, shimari-making move.

If you want to develop the 3-3 point most often the wide extensions of A and C are the proper way of playing. Although the 3-3 move does not require an immediate follow-up move you might sometimes feel like playing at B or D (my personal favorites) or any of the square marked spots. One reason, however, you might feel reluctant to spend a second move in the corner (making a 3-3 shimari) is because the most effective, the best shimari is the 4-3 shimari in dia 15a.

Diagram 15 & 15a

Not So Much Choice



This excerpt of a pro game (Ma Xiaochun, 9p vs Guo Juan, 5p) shows a typical way of developing a 3-3 stone. It is not so much that you decide which way to go to yourself. No, it is many times your opponent who decides for you which side you have to go to. In dia 16 when only thinking about the size of territory made, black is doing better because of his superior shimari at the left.

Diagram 16

This does, however, not mean that he has any kind of advantage he can exploit to win the game. White's territory at the right might very well turn out to be worth more than black's left. From here on much will depend on exactly how strong the formations white 1-5 and black 2-4 turn out to be in respect to each other. The weaker your nearby enemy stones are, the more territory you can look forward to.

That's it for this time. I hope you managed to make your way through all the above this time, too. People have told me before "You certainly seem to be writing for a wide audience, Pieter". Meaning that Gentle Joseki is sometimes targeting 20 kyu people and sometimes (like this episodes Taisha stuff) dan-ranking players. I, however, sincerely believe that **anyone** can pick-up something worthwhile here, as long as you're clear about the rules.

One other thing, since Jan Steen has redesigned my automatic mail-click-link at the bottom of this page the amount of reactions I got has drastically decreased. Please do write if you feel like it, it is a great help, believe it or not. (Sorry to the 50+ people who were on my Gentle Joseki mailing list, I forgot to save my address book when re-installing my system, oops...)

The number of people visiting Gentle Joseki has been quite stable since episode II at over 600 per new episode. Well over 1500 if you take the total of all the episodes over a 1-month period, thank you people! (now where is that filthy rich sponsor again?)

Be sure to come back for more next month. In Gentle Joseki 7 I finally will start about my hobbyhorse, the opening move at the 5-5 point. On IGS I've tried this move with both black and white in over 30 games, each game playing two 5-5 points and I surprised myself by holding onto my 3d* grade. Well, that's to show that you can play any move in the opening, as long as you've convinced yourself that it's playable, you'll get away with it for sure.

Appendix 01

Index of joseki's mentioned in this episode:

